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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 03 YEREVAN 000769

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

DEPT FOR EUR/CACEN

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [AM](#) [TU](#)

SUBJECT: GOAM RELEASES TEXT OF KOCHARIAN-ERDOGAN  
LETTER, EXPLANATORY NON-PAPER

REF: YEREVAN 707

1. (U) Sensitive But Unclassified. Please treat accordingly.

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SUMMARY  
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2. (SBU) While the final text of the letter from President Kocharian to his Turkish counterpart Prime Minister Erdogan stuck broadly to the outline that Foreign Minister Oskanian gave us April 21 (reftel), it differed slightly in tone. The text of the letter and accompanying non-paper from the MFA follow. End Summary.

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TEXT OF GOAM DIPLOMATIC NOTE NO. 25/04746  
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3. (SBU) The unofficial Embassy translation of the diplomatic note follows. Begin Text:

Ministry of Foreign Affairs  
of the Republic of Armenia

No. 25/04746

The Foreign Ministry of the Republic of Armenia presents its compliments to all the Embassies accredited to the Republic of Armenia, the U.N., the OSCE, Representatives of the European Commission and the Council of Europe and has the honor to present an unofficial English translation of the letter sent by His Excellency Robert Kocharian, President of the Republic of Armenia to His Excellency the Prime Minister of the Republic of Turkey Recep Tayyip Erdogan on April 25, as well as comments on and clarifications of the letter.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Armenia avails itself of this opportunity to renew to all the Embassies accredited to the Republic of Armenia, the U.N., the OSCE, Representatives of the European Commission and the Council of Europe the assurances of its highest consideration.

Yerevan, April 27, 2005

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TEXT OF KOCHARIAN-ERDOGAN LETTER  
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4. (SBU) Begin text:

April 25

H.E. Recep Tayyip Erdogan  
Prime Minister  
Republic of Turkey  
Ankara

Dear Prime Minister,

I'm in receipt of your letter. Indeed, as two neighbors, we both must work to find ways to live together in harmony. That is why, from the first day, we have extended our hand to you to establish relations, open the border, and thus start a dialogue between the two countries and two peoples.

There are neighboring countries, particularly on the European continent, who have had a difficult past, about which they differ. However, that has not stopped them from having open borders, normal relations, diplomatic ties, representatives in each other's capitals, even as they continue to discuss that which divides them.

Your suggestion to address the past cannot be

effective if it deflects from addressing the present and the future. In order to engage in a useful dialog, we need to create the appropriate and conducive political environment. It is the responsibility of governments to develop bilateral relations and we do not have the right to delegate that responsibility to historians. That is why we have proposed and propose again that, without preconditions, we establish normal relations between our two countries.

In that context, an intergovernmental commission can meet to discuss any and all outstanding issues between our two nations, with the aim of resolving them and coming to an understanding.  
Sincerely,

Robert Kocharian

End Text.

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TEXT OF MFA NON-PAPER  
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15. (SBU) The following is the text of the MFA non-paper (original in English) that accompanied the above diplomatic note. Begin Text:

-- The content of the letter President Kocharian received from Prime Minister Erdogan is not new. The call for historians to discuss the 'events of 1915' is a call that has been made by every single Turkish administration each time they are confronted with strong signs of international interest and attention to the Genocide and issues having to do with recognition.

-- This is the first time that this kind of proposal has been presented in writing, from the highest level. Therefore, President Kocharian has responded to Prime Minister Erdogan, even though we have serious concerns about their seriousness and sincerity.

-- Our concerns are caused by several factors:

-- First, the letter appeared in the Turkish press before it arrived in Yerevan;

-- Second, it was immediately distributed in the US Congress with the clear implication that the process of 'rapprochement' and 'reconciliation' are underway and that any US action (such as a Congressional resolution) are unnecessary;

-- Third, the Turkish penal code still penalizes citizens for using the term 'genocide' in the Armenian context. Indeed, two current court cases against writer Orhan Pamuk and publisher Ragip Zaraoklu are still pending.

-- Fourth, the Turkish Parliament held hearings in mid-April on the Armenian issue and issued a statement not only confirming their own revisionist efforts, but also blatantly calling on third countries (such as the UK) to revisit, review and revise their own archives.

-- Nevertheless, President Kocharian's letter reiterated the Armenian position: Armenia is ready to discuss any issue, at the intergovernmental level. The ideal way to do that would be to have diplomatic relations. Even if that is not immediately achievable, there can still be some normalcy in relations, open borders, easy communication and travel between our two countries and our representatives.

-- Armenia has no preconditions to establishing relations and opening borders. All bilateral problems and issues, including Genocide, can be discussed once relations are established.

-- Turkey uses three different excuses to explain their maintaining closed borders. One is Armenia's insistence on Genocide recognition. (Armenia's response is that genocide recognition and remembrance is a moral issue that cannot be dropped, but Armenia does not make such recognition or remembrance a precondition to relations.)

-- The second excuse is that Armenians have not reaffirmed Turkey's territorial integrity. (Armenia's response is that the Kars treaty which defines the current border between Armenia and

Turkey has neither been revoked nor renounced.  
Further, since independence, no Armenian official  
has made any territorial claims of Turkey.)

-- The third excuse is the still unresolved Nagorno  
Karabakh conflict. (Armenia's response is that this  
is a problem with a third country, and is unrelated  
to our bilateral relations.)

-- We fervently hope that Prime Minister Erdogan  
will respond positively to President Kocharian's  
proposal to normalize relations, so that we can  
address the most complicated problems.

Yerevan  
April 27, 2005  
End Text.  
EVANS